



chapter 3 Values, Vision, and Goals

Community Values

Community Vision

Build-out Analysis

Goals

Community Values

Township Values

Residents of Lower Paxton Township have chosen to live in the Township for various reasons. They have been drawn by community and environmental character, employment opportunities in the region, and high quality municipal services, as well as other features. Whatever the reason, residents' choice to live in Lower Paxton Township is fundamentally based on their community values.

Through a series of public meetings, residents were asked to help focus the planning process on the unique issues and assets of the Township. From the responses given, central themes for the plan emerged. The intent was that these ideas would evolve into a Township-wide vision, statements of community goals and objectives, and strategies to overcome pressing issues and to preserve and enhance existing qualities and features.

Community Planning Unit (CPU) Values

Recognizing that Lower Paxton Township has a large, diverse, and dispersed population, the Township was divided into smaller regions, Community Planning Units, to involve the public in the characterization of the Township and their local or neighborhood areas. The Lower Paxton Township Planning Commission defined seven community planning units (CPUs), as shown on the Township CPU map on the following page.

Three rounds of public meetings were held in each of the CPUs: 1) to gather public perceptions of the Township's assets and deficiencies, 2) to define vision statements for the Township and the CPUs, and 3) to present the proposed approach (goals and objectives) to make the vision a reality. Approximately 160 residents of the Township responded to a request by the Township Supervisors and the Comprehensive Planning Advisory Committee (PAC) to take part in the planning process by sharing their thoughts and ideas on these topics.

Participants in the first round of CPU meetings were asked to list their most and least liked features of the Township and to rate the value or significance of the four most and four least liked features. The input of the focus group participants generated a summary list of the Township's top five most valued assets.

Township Assets

- High quality park and recreation facilities and programs
- Convenient access to diverse services and amenities
- Lifestyle choices in various settings: country-living, small town/villages, and suburban neighborhoods
- Open spaces, wildlife, and wildlife habitats
- High quality community services

The input of the focus group participants also generated a summary list of the Township's top concerns from residents' perspectives.

Township Issues

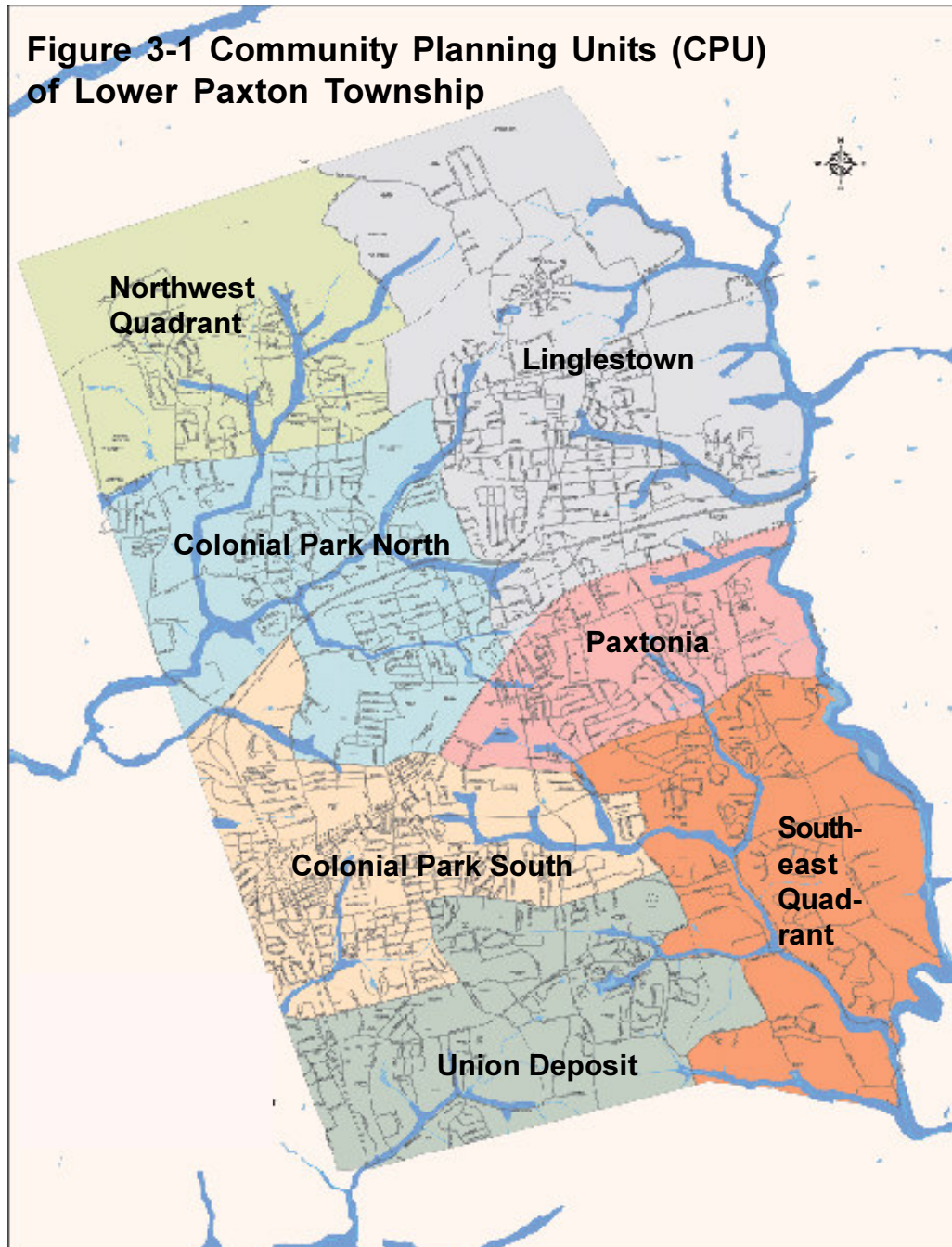
- The full range of transportation issues: traffic, bicycle and pedestrian movements, connectivity, roadway deficiencies, and problem intersections.
- The management of growth to control the amount, style, and timing of residential development, and the reuse and design of existing and future commercial development.
- The stabilization of the tax base.
- The reduction of all forms of pollution: light, noise, litter, and water

Community Vision

With an understanding of how residents view current community life in Lower Paxton Township, a vision for an improved community life can be defined. Since residents recognize both assets and issues within the Township, a vision was built upon these comments. The vision framed assets as resources and policies to be preserved and enhanced and transformed issues and conditions of concern into conditions of community benefit. Based on the list of most liked and least liked features, a vision statement was drafted for the Township and for each CPU. These vision statements were reviewed and revised at a second round of CPU meetings in the spring of 2002. Participants agreed, disagreed, reworded and rephrased the various vision components until consensus was reached that the vision statement accurately described what they wanted for the future of their community.

The following narrative is the vision statement for Lower Paxton Township.

Figure 3-1 Community Planning Units (CPU) of Lower Paxton Township



COMMUNITY VISION STATEMENT

Lower Paxton Township is a community where...

...development is guided to appropriate locations and densities by the application of growth management tools in order to minimize the financial costs and environmental impacts, and to enhance investment in the community. Open space is valued, whether public or private, and sprawling development is clearly undesirable.

...employment opportunities are available and buildings, especially in commercial areas, are actively occupied.

...residential care facilities are available for elderly.

...neighborhoods are safe for children.

...utilities and infrastructure are improved prior to service expansion.

...vehicles, bicyclists, pedestrians, and transit riders move safely and efficiently within and through the Township.

...residents can participate in recreational programs and have access to parks and recreational facilities.

...water resources, woodlands, and wildlife are conserved for ecological and community benefits.

...the character of the resident community is displayed through the Township landscape.

In addition to this text review, participants were asked to identify specific locations on maps where the vision could be implemented. Where should new housing be built? Where are roadways and intersections problematic? Where would new roads be effective? What destinations should bike routes connect in the CPU or across the Township? Where might new parks be located? What neighborhoods would benefit from sidewalks? Participants circled intersections, highlighted road segments, and drew bicycle/pedestrian routes on Township and CPU maps. In preparation for future land use planning, they were also asked to identify potential land uses for Key Opportunity Sites.

Key Opportunity Sites (KOS) are vacant or undeveloped parcels within the Township that have significant potential for future development (Map 10). Since development of any size or type impacts the community, participants were asked what type, how much, and where development would benefit residents, the local economy, and the community as a whole. Fifty-one vacant tracts were identified by the planning team as KOSs. They ranged from three acres to over 400 acres in size and were found in each of the seven CPUs. Several of the KOSs lie adjacent to existing development but lack street frontage or other good roadway access. Most lie in residential or commercial zoning districts.

These graphic ideas were then summarized on a single vision map (Map 11) and presented to the Township community, along with the revised vision statements for each CPU in a public poster display.

Build-Out Analysis

A build-out analysis allows the community to review the potential population or carrying capacity of the municipality under current zoning and other regulations. There is typically a common assumption that zoning ordinances and practices will provide a certain level of protection from development activity. The build-out analysis provides a look at the future under current zoning provisions to determine just how much development could occur and the total conceptual populations for the municipality.

Factors

Build out is based upon a number of factors such as: zoning densities, amount of vacant land, buildable land, types of housing, projected population and persons per housing unit.

Projected Population

According to the 2000 Census, Lower Paxton Township had 44,424 residents. This is an increase from the 1990 population of 39,264 or 5,160 more people for a percent change of 13.1 percent. After the City of Harrisburg, Lower Paxton Township remains the second largest municipality in the Tri-County region (Dauphin/Cumberland/Perry).

Population projections for the Township were derived from two sources: BonData projections in the comprehensive plan and the Act 537 Plan projections. Both sets of projections indicate that the Township will grow to between 55,000 (BonData) and 53,000 (ACT 537 Plan) by the period 2020/2022. These projections represent an increase of nearly 25 percent over the next 20 years or approximately 11,000 persons. More significantly, this projection would require approximately another 4,700 housing units to house this population based upon 2.35 persons per household, as reported in the 2000 Census.

Table 3-1
Equivalent Dwelling Units (EDUs) Associated with Proposed and Potential Development

	# of EDUs
Proposed Development in the Beaver Creek Basin	1,710
Proposed Development in the Harrisburg WWTP Basins (Paxton Creek, Spring Creek and Asylum Run)	2,211
Remaining Undeveloped Acreage and Projected EDUs (Beaver Creek Basin)	2,191
Remaining Undeveloped Acreage and Projected EDUs (Paxton Creek, Spring Creek and Asylum Creek)	1,651
Totals EDUs	7,763

Build-out Analysis

At this point, the Township is not expected to reach a complete build-out condition prior to 2020. The Comprehensive Plan Land Use Profile indicates that 39 percent of the Township remains undeveloped. Much of this land is probably undevelopable due to steep slopes (Blue Mountain) or other natural or man-made barriers. Nevertheless, a significant amount of the Township is potentially available for development purposes.

The Township's Act 537 Sewage Facilities Plan Update (submitted September 2002) presents a detailed analysis of proposed developments and remaining undeveloped acreage in the Township. This information was subject to considerable field investigation and is represented as equivalent dwelling units (EDUs). Table 3-1 summarizes this information.

This total represents the potential number of housing units that could be built in the Township based upon housing projects that are already in the building pipeline, and potential housing units on undeveloped land. Using this total of 7,763 EDUs and a 2.39 persons per household (Act 537 Sewage Facilities Plan), it is possible that another 18,234 persons could be housed in the Township or a total population of 63,934 (18,234 + 2002 population of 45,700, as estimated in the Act 537 Sewage Facilities Plan).

This build-out population of 63,934 is not based on a particular year but could occur sometime in the distant future. The purpose of preparing the build-out is to demonstrate the consequences of continuing to follow current land use and zoning regulations. Techniques have been introduced in the comprehensive plan that will

provide the Township with land development alternatives that can impact this build-out and improve development patterns in the Township.

Tri-County Regional Growth Management Plan

This analysis is supported by separate research completed for the Tri-County Regional Growth Management Plan and the Dauphin County Comprehensive Plan. The Tri-County Regional Growth Management Plan indicates that much of Lower Paxton Township lies within a Community Service Area (CSA), i.e. is served by public water and sewer utilities. Within the CSA-portion of the Township, there is vacant buildable land (comprised of 1+ acre parcels) totaling 1,805 acres that could accommodate approximately 4,967 dwelling units under current zoning. The majority of vacant buildable land for residential uses (1,248 acres or 69 percent) is located in the R-1 district.

Based on state population projections and 200 Census data for persons per household (2.35) and year-round vacancy rates (5.21 percent), Tri-County Regional Planning Commission calculated the need for additional housing units through 2020, namely 2,895 units. Therefore the need for additional housing units can be met 1.5 times in the CSA-portion of Lower Paxton Township under current zoning.

The analysis also states that if housing construction continues at rates similar to the 1990-2000 rate, the Township could have 1.5 times as many units as the projected need. If this were to occur, the vacancy rate may rise beyond a healthy 5 percent.

Goals

With a vision of the kind of community residents wish to have, a list of goals, objectives, and strategies that would enable the Township to achieve its vision and those of the CPUs was prepared. Each item from the vision statement was categorized by its relationship to municipal planning and written as a goal—a broad directive for enhancement or improvement. Objectives were then written to support each goal, describing various means by which to achieve progress. Finally, strategies detailed specific actions to be taken and were accompanied by relevant tools, partners, and funding resources in the various action plans (see Chapter 4). This categorization and development process involved the PAC, the Planning Commission, and the Board of Supervisors as goals were deemed relevant to each CPU or the Township as a whole.

Land Use Goals and Objectives

Strategically manage development with growth management tools and a clear understanding of desirable local growth.

- Promote the Township's comprehensive plan and the future land use plan as the working guide for Township growth and development.
- Target growth to areas with existing infrastructure.
- Encourage innovative, open space/conservation-oriented development.

Conserve land resources and discourage commercial sprawl.

- Encourage building re-use and site redevelopment.

Promote and enhance community character.

- Manage PA Route 39/Lingletown Road in the Township as a business campus/neighborhood commercial services (small-scale office/retail) corridor.
- Preserve and enhance the existing neighborhood commercial services (small-scale office/retail) environment.
- Support the development of new villages (as Traditional Neighborhood Developments, TNDs) in the Township.
- Preserve and promote green/open space throughout developed areas.

CPU Land Use Objectives

Colonial Park North

- Maintain and preserve residential neighborhoods as the predominate land use.
- Maintain shopping and services that are convenient and diverse.

Colonial Park South

- Preserve the character of older neighborhoods.
- Reuse and renovate older commercial/retail sites.

Lingletown

- Conserve the unique character of the Village of Lingletown.
- Manage growth (location, use and density) consistent with the Future Land Use and Transportation Map.
- Preserve unique environmental features in the Lingletown CPU.

Northwest

- Manage development densities and limit land use conflicts throughout the CPU.

Paxtonia

- Encourage neighborhood services that are small scale, convenient and diverse along Jonestown Road.
- Manage growth (location, use and density) by implementing the Township's Future Land Use and Transportation Map.

Southeast

- Manage growth (location, use and density) by implementing the Township's Future Land Use and Transportation Map.

Union Deposit

- Promote growth management in the commercial/retail sector.
- Retain single-family housing as the predominant residential type.

Housing Goals and Objectives

Maintain the quality and diversity of the existing housing stock in the Township.

- Promote quality maintenance of the existing housing stock.
- Encourage new housing development to provide diverse housing opportunities.

Provide housing alternatives for a variety of household compositions.

- Provide housing alternatives for seniors.

Economic Goals and Objectives

Encourage employment opportunities for Township residents.

- Market established, vacant sites for re-use or re-development.
- Market business campus sites (greenfields) to potential new commercial office development.

Transportation Goals and Objectives

Continue to enforce traffic safety.

- Manage traffic safety, especially in residential neighborhoods.

Maintain and improve the existing transportation network with scheduled projects to provide safe, efficient transportation facilities.

- Program Township roadway improvements.
- Work cooperatively with PENNDOT to evaluate and program state roadway improvements in the Township.
- Program Township road intersection improvements.
- Participate in regional transportation studies.

Assure that pedestrians, bicyclists and transit riders can safely move throughout the Township.

- Provide for safe pedestrian access and travel.
- Provide for safe bicycle travel.
- Encourage the enhancement of transit services in the Township.

Manage the U.S. Route 22 corridor for transportation, transportation alternatives, and community character.

- Improve traffic flow and safety along the U.S. Route 22 corridor.
- Provide for transportation alternatives along and across the U.S. Route 22 corridor.
- Improve the visual character of the U.S. Route 22 corridor.

Community Facilities and Services Goals and Objectives

Encourage public/private partnerships for the provision of community services.

- Continue to provide emergency medical services.

Enhance existing recreational areas and develop new recreational areas.

- Develop facilities for the AMP Tract.
- Develop facilities for the Wolfersberger Tract.
- Develop a regional park in the Northwest CPU.
- Develop a regional park in the Southeast CPU.
- Establish a Township-wide bicycle/pedestrian network.

Establish a preferred method of public input for proposed development.

- Provide a model for developer/resident dialogue.

Promote community pride, cleanliness, and character.

- Encourage property maintenance.
- Assure that signs are regulated and compatible with community character.
- Reduce light pollution.

Public Utilities Goals and Objectives

Guide growth with the availability of public utilities.

- Promote extension of public water to unserved sites within existing service areas.
- Implement the Act 537 Plan recommendations.
- Limit the extension of sewer infrastructure.

Protect water supply resources.

- Protect water supply resources for private wells.
- Protect water supply resources for downstream communities.
- Reduce the need for and impacts of stormwater management.

Conserve material and energy resources.

- Continue waste reduction efforts.

Natural and Cultural Resources Goals and Objectives

Protect natural resources from direct and indirect impacts of development.

- Protect stream corridors with riparian buffers.
- Preserve woodland vegetation.
- Work cooperatively with local and regional partners to improve environmental health.
- Promote private efforts toward resource protection and conservation.

Interconnect the Township community with greenway connections.

- Develop a Township-wide greenway network.
- Develop greenways in each CPU.

Support and encourage the exploration and promotion of local heritage and cultural resources.

- Support and promote the efforts of local historical and civic organizations.
- Continue support for implementation of the Linglestown Village Action Plan.